



THUNDER BASIN NATIONAL GRASSLANDS COMPLEX (3 IBAS)

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Name	Thunder Basin National Grasslands Complex (3 IBAs)		
Status	Recognized	State	Wyoming
Priority	State	Counties	Campbell, Converse, Crook, Niobrara, Weston
Proposed Criteria	-		
Confirmed Criteria	-		
Central Coordinates	Area (acres)	Elevation (meters)	
44.18333, -105.37500		Min: 1,158 Max: 1,585 Avg: 1,950	

Bird Conservation Region

Badlands and Prairies

SITE DESCRIPTION

Thunder Basin National Grasslands is located in east-central Wyoming and encompasses 3 counties. The Thunder Basin National Grassland encompasses about 572,000 acres of National Forest System (NFS) lands in the eastern region of Wyoming. These lands are interspersed with lands of other ownership, including state and private. The Douglas Ranger District (Douglas, Wyoming) administers the Thunder Basin National Grassland. The Thunder Basin National Grassland is divided into the following 6 geographic areas: Broken Hills, Cellars Rosecrans, Fairview Clareton, Hilight Bill, Spring Creek, and Upton Osage. Three geographic regions were nominated as the Thunder Basin National Grasslands Complex. They include: Cellars Loop, Rochelle Hills/Cheyenne River and Six Mile areas. The Rochelle Hills/Cheyenne River Area includes part of the Broken Hills and Cellar Rosecrans geographic areas. This area lies largely within the central part of the Thunder Basin National Grassland from the Cheyenne River north. Fairly level plains to rolling hills characterize the topography of the area. A small portion of the area is also characterized by rolling hills to steep escarpments in the Red Hills locale. The Cellars Loop area The climate of the area can be classified as semi-arid Continental. The area is characterized by cold winters and warm summers, with somewhat infrequent periods of hot weather of more than 100?? Fahrenheit. Annual precipitation is generally between 10 and 14 inches, with about 40 inches of snowfall each year. Winds from the southwest are prevalent and sometimes strong.

ORNITHOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE

The Thunder Basin National Grasslands IBA Complex is highly important for many species of our grassland and shrubland bird species. Some of which include: Northern Sage-grouse Breeding 40+ leks Ferruginous Hawk Breeding 200+ known nest sites Bald Eagle Breeding/Winter 1-2 breeding, winter roost sites Prairie Falcon Breeding 7 known eyrie nest Red-tailed Hawk Breeding 100+ known nest sites Swainson?s Hawk Breeding 10+ known nest Mountain Plover Breeding 10-15 individuals Merlin Breeding 1 known nest Burrowing Owl Breeding 40-50+ nest sites Great Horned Owl Breeding ? In 1997 Ferruginous Hawk Production was 1.5 young/successful nest and Golden Eagle was 1.4 young/occupied nest. ? Historically, Mountain Plovers were more prevalent in the area, however their declines are believed to be due to habitat changes over time. ? Other bird species: see attached bird list ? Ornithological info from raptor nest surveys and COOP research data.

HABITAT

Assessment Date	% of IBA	Habitat
1/1/2008	10	Wetlands/Woody Wetlands/Lowland Riparian
	30	Shrubland/Shrubland/Sagebrush
	60	Herbaceous Upland/Grassland/Herbaceous/Grassland

1/1/2008	<p>Rochelle Hills/Cheyenne River Area: The primary drainages in this geographic area are Black Thunder Creek and its tributaries Little Thunder and HA Creeks, the mainstem of Dry Creek and its tributaries Bobcat, Deer, and Little Rat Creeks, the Dry Fork of the Cheyenne River, and tributaries to Antelope Creek. The dominant vegetation includes Wyoming big sagebrush, needle-and-thread grass, blue grama grass, western wheatgrass, and ponderosa pine. Scenic buttes and hilly landscapes, remote and secluded roadless areas, significant populations of mule deer, pronghorn antelope and elk and largely undisturbed open country. Cellars Loop Area: This area is fairly level plains to rolling hills characterize the topography of the area. Elevation ranges from about 4,300 feet above sea level to 4,700 feet above sea level. The primary drainages in the geographic area are Black Thunder Creek and the lower portion of Little Black Thunder Creek. Portions of the Cheyenne River (including tributaries Frog and Horse Creeks) and Antelope Creek also flow through this geographic area. The dominant vegetation includes blue grama, Wyoming big sagebrush, cottonwood, western wheatgrass and needle-and-thread. Six Mile BArea: This geographic area is located in the easternmost part of the national grassland, between the Cheyenne River and US Highway 16. Annual precipitation is generally between 10 to 14 inches at the lower elevations, and between 15 to 19 inches in the more northerly areas of the geographic area. The topography of the area consists of nearly level plains to rolling and moderately steep hills with some gullied lands. Elevation ranges between 3,800 to 4,800 feet above sea level. The primary drainages in the geographic area are Lodgepole Creek (including tributaries Wildcat, Lone Tree, Deep, and Hay Creeks) and Beaver Creek (including tributaries South Beaver,</p>
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Mush, Fiddler, and lower Iron and Turner Creeks). The dominant vegetation includes Wyoming big sagebrush, blue gram

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